



CORE COMPETENCIES

for Early Childhood and Youth Development Professionals

(Kansas and Missouri)

Welcome!

Welcome to the first edition of the combined *Core Competencies for Early Childhood and Youth Development Professionals (Kansas and Missouri)*. This framework combines the knowledge and skills outlined in the previous versions of the *Kansas and Missouri Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals (2001)* and *Kansas and Missouri Core Competencies for Youth Development Professionals (2006)* and has been updated to reflect current research in the field.

Professionals from various agencies collaborated to develop this edition. Recognizing opportunities to provide consistency for program staff, the following organizations collaborated and provided leadership to develop one set of core competencies to serve as the foundation for the Kansas and Missouri professional development systems for both early childhood and youth development professionals:

Child Care Aware® of Kansas

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785-823-3343
www.ks.childcareaware.org

OPEN Initiative

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Missouri AfterSchool Network (MASN)

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Kansas Enrichment Network

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For additional copies

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Missouri Residents contact:
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So, what are core competencies anyway?

Core competencies are what you need to know to provide quality early childhood and youth development activities and interactions. The *Core Competencies for Early Childhood and Youth Development Professionals (Kansas and Missouri)* is a framework that defines the standards for early childhood and youth development professionals. They set the expectations for professionals who care for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, school-age children, and older youth.

8 Content Areas

The Core Competencies are organized into eight Content Areas, each providing specific standards that help professionals learn to fully include children and youth with various ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds — as well as diverse needs and abilities.

- I. Child and Youth Growth and Development
- II. Learning Environment and Curriculum
- III. Observation and Assessment
- IV. Families and Communities
- V. Health and Safety
- VI. Interactions with Children and Youth
- VII. Program Planning and Development
- VIII. Professional Development and Leadership

5 Levels

Each Content Area is divided into five levels of skills. These levels outline the knowledge essential in providing quality programming, and establishing a continuum from preliminary skills (Level 1) to an advanced level of skills (Level 5). The five levels are

intended to be cumulative — with knowledge and skills in one level required before moving to the next higher level. This development generally progresses from knowing and following, to planning and implementing, to eventually analyzing and evaluating program and practices. As professionals gain knowledge and skills through work experience and formal education/training, they will advance through the five levels in each Content Area. Depending on a professional's role, setting, or experience—he or she may have skills at varying levels in different areas.

Level 1 includes the knowledge and skills expected of a professional new to the profession, with minimal specialized training/education.

Level 2 includes Level 1, plus the knowledge and skills expected of a professional with a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, Youth Development Credential (YDC), or equivalent training and education.

Level 3 includes Levels 1 and 2, plus the knowledge and skills expected of a professional with an associate's degree in early childhood, youth development or related fields.

Level 4 includes Levels 1, 2, and 3, plus the knowledge and skills expected of a professional with a bachelor's degree in child/youth development or related fields.

Level 5 includes Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 plus the knowledge and skills expected of a professional with an advanced degree in child/youth development or related fields.

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We believe:

- Early childhood and youth development professionals assume many roles in a variety of settings.
- Competent, well-trained professionals are the key to quality child and youth programs.
- Professional development requires reflection on practices to identify strengths, recognize areas for future growth, and incorporate new learning experiences.
- Cultural diversity impacts all areas of practice. Professionals recognize that each family is unique in its structure, values, beliefs, traditions, and interactions. Professionals respect each family's worth and appreciate the richness of diversity that each family brings to the program.
- Children and youth require meaningful, relevant, and supportive settings to develop.
- The family has primary responsibility for the education and development of their child, so early childhood and youth development professionals work to support the family as a whole.
- Children and youth develop to their fullest potential when adults form nurturing relationships and create environments and experiences that are inclusive of their cultures, needs, and abilities.

Indicators

A companion document of indicators will support early childhood and youth development professionals to further meet each competency statement. Whereas the competency statements were developed as general broad statements for all professionals regardless of role, the indicators provide specific role-based examples of how professionals can meet each competency.

For more information on indicators, visit www.ks.childcareaware.org, www.OPENInitiative.org, or www.moasn.org

How can YOU benefit?

All program staff can...

- Assess current knowledge and skills
- Identify areas for professional growth
- Create a plan for developing as a professional

Directors and program administrators can...

- Create position descriptions and staff evaluation tools
- Develop and track professional development plans
- Establish a salary scale based on levels of competency achievement

Trainers and training organizations can...

- Plan and organize training and education opportunities
- Promote training and education focusing on specific competencies

Higher education faculty, staff, and administrators can...

- Evaluate and refine course content
- Coordinate and design course content to facilitate transfer and articulation agreements

Other stakeholders can...

- Establish standards for early childhood and youth development systems efforts
- Promote the use of the Core Competencies across programs, agencies, and higher education institutions
- Connect stakeholders around common goals of professionals working with children and youth to families, communities, and public education (K-12)





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Content Area I:

Child and Youth Growth and Development

Early childhood and youth development professionals understand how children and youth learn and develop in each of the domains: physical, language and communication, social and emotional, creative, and cognitive.

1. Promoting Growth and Development

Level 1

- ☐ a. Is aware of basic benchmarks for growth and development.
- ☐ b. Recognizes that children and youth have individual needs, characteristics, abilities, and develop at their own rate.
- ☐ c. Recognizes that learning develops through experience and active participation.
- ☐ d. Accepts differences in development.
- ☐ e. Values different personalities.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Identifies benchmarks related to physical, language and communication, social and emotional, creative, and cognitive development.
- ☐ b. Promotes growth and development using appropriate services and resources, including technology.
- ☐ c. Identifies different temperaments, personalities, and learning styles.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Communicates physical, language and communication, social and emotional, and creative, and cognitive differences among children and youth.
- ☐ b. Employs practices to support an inclusive philosophy.
- ☐ c. Explains major research-based theories related to growth and development.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Collaborates with others to promote growth and development.
- ☐ b. Applies research-based theories of growth and development to planning and practice.
- ☐ c. Explains the multiple influences on development and learning.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy to promote the growth and development of children and youth.
- ☐ b. Integrates information on growth, development, learning patterns, diverse abilities, and multiple intelligences and applies to practice.



Content Area II:

Learning Environment and Curriculum

Early childhood and youth development professionals establish an environment that provides learning experiences that meet the needs, interests, development, and skill levels of each child and youth.

1. Creating a Developmentally Appropriate Learning Environment and Curriculum

Level 1

- ☐ a. Explains Developmentally Appropriate Practice.
- ☐ b. Recognizes the importance of creating a developmentally appropriate learning environment and following a curriculum.
- ☐ c. Identifies aspects of a developmentally appropriate environment and learning plan.
- ☐ d. Discusses how children and youth learn through relationships, activities, and play.
- ☐ e. Engages children and youth in activities that meet the individual needs, interests, development, and skill levels.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Provides an interesting, secure, and inclusive environment to encourage play, exploration, and learning across the developmental domains.
- ☐ b. Creates developmentally appropriate learning environments and curriculum using appropriate services and resources, including technology.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Creates environments and learning experiences to value, affirm, and respect diverse needs and abilities.
- ☐ b. Designs and implements learning opportunities that include goals and objectives.
- ☐ c. Uses a broad collection of effective teaching/learning strategies, tools, and approaches to meet individual needs and enhance learning.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Applies content knowledge, concepts, and skills to create a developmentally appropriate learning environment and integrated curriculum.

- ☐ b. Reflects on the effectiveness of learning environments and curriculum to meet individual needs, interests, development, and skill levels and makes appropriate changes.
- ☐ c. Develops a learning environment and curriculum using major theories of child and youth development.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy on learning environments, teaching, and curriculum.

2. Promoting Physical Development

Level 1

- ☐ a. Closely supervises and interacts with children and youth during physical activities.
- ☐ b. Assists with fine and gross motor skill development.



Level 2

- ☐ a. Provide a learning environment where children and youth can explore and develop physical motor skills.
- ☐ b. Adapts physical motor activities and interactions to support diverse needs and abilities.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Incorporates activities promoting physical development across curricular areas.
- ☐ b. Identifies the importance of sensory integration and its impact on learning.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Evaluates the appropriateness and effectiveness of physical development activities.
- ☐ b. Explains perceptual motor development and its impact on learning.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting physical development.



3. Promoting Language and Communication Development

Level 1

- ☐ a. Models appropriate and respectful communication skills.
- ☐ b. Encourages children and youth to communicate in a variety of ways.
- ☐ c. Responds to communication in a positive and timely manner.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Provides a learning environment to promote the development and exploration language and communication skills.
- ☐ b. Adapts language communication activities and interactions to support diverse needs and abilities.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Incorporates activities promoting language and communication development across curricular areas.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Evaluates the appropriateness and effectiveness of language and communication activities and interactions.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting language and communication development.

4. Promoting Social and Emotional Development

Level 1

- ☐ a. Encourages age appropriate emotional expression.
- ☐ b. Models appropriate social interactions.
- ☐ c. Recognizes that change, separation, stress, and transition affect social and emotional development and behavior.
- ☐ d. Appreciates how children and youth develop a sense of self.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Provides a safe learning environment where children and youth can explore and develop socially and emotionally.
- ☐ b. Helps children and youth communicate and get along with others in a safe and inclusive environment.
- ☐ c. Adapts activities and interactions to support social and emotional development.



- ☐ d. Guides children and youth in expressing their feelings and asserting themselves in socially acceptable ways.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Incorporates activities promoting social and emotional development across curricular areas.
- ☐ b. Supports children and youth in developing a sense of self.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Evaluates the appropriateness and effectiveness of activities and interactions relating to social and emotional development.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting social and emotional development.

5. Promoting Creative Development

Level 1

- ☐ a. Recognizes and supports individual expression.
- ☐ b. Encourages children and youth to try new activities.
- ☐ c. Provides equipment and materials that can be used in a variety of ways to encourage imagination and creativity.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Provides a learning environment where children and youth can explore and develop creative skills.
- ☐ b. Adapts creative activities and interactions to support diverse needs and abilities.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Incorporates activities promoting creative development across curricular areas.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Evaluates the appropriateness and effectiveness of creative activities.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting creative development.

6. Promoting Cognitive Development

Level 1

- ☐ a. Extends learning through questions and conversations.
- ☐ b. Models listening and is responsive to encourage learning.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Provides a learning environment where children and youth can explore and develop cognitive skills.
- ☐ b. Adapts cognitive activities and interactions to support diverse needs and abilities.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Incorporates activities promoting cognitive development across curricular areas.
- ☐ b. Provides activities and interactions that promote critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Evaluates the appropriateness and effectiveness of cognitive activities and interactions.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting cognitive development.

Content Area III:

Observation and Assessment

Early childhood and youth development professionals continually communicate, interact, and observe to assist in the understanding of the behaviors of children and youth. Observations and assessments develop goals that produce positive outcomes for children and youth.

1. Observing and Assessing Children and Youth

Level 1

- ☐ a. Recognizes that observation and assessment are ongoing processes.
- ☐ b. Maintains confidentiality regarding observation and assessment information.
- ☐ c. Assists with the collection of information about growth, development, and learning.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Collects and organizes information while following appropriate procedures for observation, assessment, and referrals.
- ☐ b. Assesses children and youth using appropriate services and resources, including technology.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Discusses the purposes, benefits, and uses of informal and formal assessments.
- ☐ b. Engages in ongoing assessment of individual growth, development, and learning and applies this knowledge to practice.
- ☐ c. Recommends appropriate referrals based on observation, documentation, and assessment.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Develops a plan that utilizes assessment information to improve curriculum and modify learning experiences.
- ☐ b. Interprets assessment results and communicates them in a clear and supportive manner.
- ☐ c. Implements formal and informal assessment tools for individual and group learning.
- ☐ d. Collaborates to create partnerships for assessment.
- ☐ e. Analyzes and evaluates observation and assessment data and applies knowledge to practice.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting observation and assessment.



Content Area IV:

Families and Communities

Early childhood and youth development professionals work collaboratively with families and agencies/organizations to meet the needs of children, youth, and families while encouraging the community's involvement with early childhood and youth development.

1. Communicating with Families

Level 1

- ☐ a. Communicates respectfully and positively with families from a variety of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.
- ☐ b. Respects the choices and goals families make for their children.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Engages families in discussions regarding their child's development.
- ☐ b. Communicates and assists families by sharing appropriate services, resources, and technology.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Engages families in discussions to promote respectful partnerships.
- ☐ b. Shares information with families about the relationship between learning activities and development.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Partners, plans, and communicates to enhance family support and participation.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy to promote family communication.

2. Building Relationships with Families

Level 1

- ☐ a. Develops and maintains open, friendly, cooperative, and respectful relationships with families.
- ☐ b. Recognizes and respects that factors may influence how families nurture and support their child.
- ☐ c. Protects children, youth, and family confidentiality.
- ☐ d. Identifies ways to support the relationship between children and their families.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Respects the family's role in, influence on, and responsibility for education and development.
- ☐ b. Explores the use of different resources, including technology, to build relationships with families.
- ☐ c. Creates and provides opportunities for continual family involvement throughout the program.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Demonstrates a strengths-based approach when working with families.
- ☐ b. Identifies and demonstrates support for families through reciprocal relationships.



Level 4

- ☐ a. Develops partnerships with families to support their child's learning, development, and well-being.
- ☐ b. Articulates and integrates theories of family development.
- ☐ c. Assesses, plans, and conducts activities for family support and participation.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting relationships with families.
- ☐ b. Reviews the effectiveness of family involvement activities and modifies as needed.

3. Building Partnerships within Communities

Level 1

- ☐ a. Recognizes and uses community resources to support and assist families.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Identifies the larger community context in which children, youth, and families live.
- ☐ b. Builds relationships within communities using appropriate services and resources, including technology.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Establishes positive relationships with community partners.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Develops partnerships with community members to support learning, development, and well-being of children and youth.
- ☐ b. Recognizes the influence of community norms on relationships, environment, and learning.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting relationships within communities.
- ☐ b. Represents children and youth in collaborative community endeavors to support learning, development, and well-being.



Content Area V:

Health and Safety

Early childhood and youth development professionals establish and maintain an environment that manages risk, ensures safety, promotes physical and mental well-being, and encourages healthy nutrition.

1. Promoting Risk Management Practices

Level 1

- ☐ a. Protects others by following health and safety regulations and policies.
- ☐ b. Identifies, documents, and reports suspected child abuse and neglect as mandated by law.
- ☐ c. Responds calmly and effectively to a crisis.
- ☐ d. Practices safety awareness including personal safety.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Communicates and follows emergency preparedness plans.
- ☐ b. Promotes risk management practices using appropriate services and resources, including technology.
- ☐ c. Ensures adherence to health and safety regulations and policies.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Develops procedures and emergency preparedness plans.
- ☐ b. Develops and implements systems for documentation and notification of suspected child abuse and neglect, in accordance with state law.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Articulates and monitors adherence to regulations and policies pertaining to health and safety.
- ☐ b. Anticipates and plans for potential risks to protect children, youth, and adults.
- ☐ c. Assesses how regulations, policies, and procedures affect the program.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting risk management practices.

2. Protecting Children and Youth

Level 1

- ☐ a. Recognizes and maintains safe indoor and outdoor areas.
- ☐ b. Follows safe practices.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Assesses and adapts environments, including when away from the facility, to ensure the safety of children and youth.
- ☐ b. Plans experiences to keep children and youth safe.
- ☐ c. Promotes safety using appropriate services, resources, and technology.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Creates safe environments and procedures for children, youth, and adults.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Collaborates with others to ensure adherence to the safety of children and youth.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy protecting children and youth.



3. Promoting Physical Health

Level 1

- ☐ a. Follows practices to support the health of each child and youth.
- ☐ b. Models healthy lifestyle practices.
- ☐ c. Maintains sanitary environments.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Monitors the environment for healthy practices, making improvements as necessary.
- ☐ b. Implements procedures to promote physical health.
- ☐ c. Plans experiences to promote health and fitness.
- ☐ d. Recognizes children and youth's exploration and curiosity about the human body and responds appropriately.
- ☐ e. Uses appropriate services and resources, including technology, to promote each child's and youth's physical health.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Designs and assesses environments and procedures to protect the health of children, youth, and adults.
- ☐ b. Identifies physical signs of stress and trauma and makes appropriate referrals.



- ☐ c. Accommodates diverse health needs and abilities.
- ☐ d. Promotes a healthy lifestyle.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Collaborates with others to promote physical health and fitness.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting physical health.

4. Promoting Mental Health

Level 1

- ☐ a. States the importance of mental wellness and how it connects to the individual's overall health.
- ☐ b. Recognizes that children and youth have individual mental health needs and require an individualized response.
- ☐ c. Understands the need for positive and consistent relationships.
- ☐ d. Follows practices to support the emotional well-being of children and youth.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Responds individually to unique mental health needs.
- ☐ b. Recognizes the characteristics of a healthy sense of self and the related ability to make appropriate choices.
- ☐ c. Promotes each child's and youth's ability to maintain consistent relationships with peers and adults.
- ☐ d. Promotes mental health using appropriate services and resources, including technology.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Recognizes signs of stress and emotional trauma and makes appropriate referrals.
- ☐ b. Monitors and implements strategies to support the mental well-being of children and youth.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Collaborates with others to promote mental health.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting mental health.

5. Promoting Healthy Eating

Level 1

- ☐ a. Follows practices to support the nutritional needs of children and youth.
- ☐ b. Models healthy eating practices.
- ☐ c. Promotes age-appropriate activities and interactions to support nutrition and healthy eating practices.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Identifies the roles and responsibilities of adults when providing food to children and youth.
- ☐ b. Plans experiences to promote nutrition and healthy eating practices.
- ☐ c. Communicates with others about the nutritional needs and preferences of children and youth.
- ☐ d. Reviews the nutrition program, making improvements as necessary.
- ☐ e. Promotes healthy eating practices by using appropriate services and resources, including technology.
- ☐ f. Accommodates diverse nutritional needs and eating practices.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Incorporates activities promoting healthy nutrition across curricular areas.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Collaborates with others to promote nutrition.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting nutrition.



Content Area VI:

Interactions with Children and Youth

Early childhood and youth development professionals establish supportive relationships with children and youth, and work to guide and empower them as individuals and as a part of a group.

1. Providing Individual Guidance

Level 1

- ☐ a. Guides behavior in positive ways.
- ☐ b. Demonstrates developmentally appropriate guidance approaches and interactions.
- ☐ c. Models and practices a positive attitude and respect for self and others.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Provides a supportive environment in which children and youth can learn and practice appropriate and acceptable behaviors.
- ☐ b. Provides individual guidance using appropriate services and resources, including technology.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Uses age-appropriate guidance strategies.
- ☐ b. Partners with others to develop and implement individualized guidance strategies.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Applies theories of child and youth development to improve guidance strategies.
- ☐ b. Individualizes and improves guidance through observation and assessment data.
- ☐ c. Applies differentiated instructional and guidance techniques to meet diverse needs and abilities.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting individual guidance.

2. Enhancing Group Experiences

Level 1

- ☐ a. States the importance of flexibility when working with children and youth in groups.
- ☐ b. Recognizes that working with groups is different from working with individuals.
- ☐ c. Considers development, interests, age, abilities, and skill levels when grouping children and youth.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Provides organization and flexibility when working with children and youth in groups.
- ☐ b. Enhances group experiences using appropriate services and resources, including technology.
- ☐ c. Recognizes how group dynamics affect the learning process.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Plans and guides activities to teach children and youth how to be a group member.
- ☐ b. Designs and adapts group experiences to promote engagement and learning.
- ☐ c. Observes group activities and transitions to enhance individual experiences.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Utilizes group management strategies based on theories of child and youth development.
- ☐ b. Analyzes observation and assessment data to improve group experiences.
- ☐ c. Designs and develops effective group activities and interactions based on current research and curriculum.



Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy enhancing group experiences.

3. Engaging and Empowering Children and Youth

Level 1

- ☐ a. Provides an environment that offers choices.
- ☐ b. Promotes and supports child-initiated and youth-led learning activities.
- ☐ c. Provides children and youth with leadership opportunities.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Supports active participation of children and youth in the program.
- ☐ b. Develops relationships with children and youth while respecting cultural differences in participation style.
- ☐ c. Fosters critical thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, and goal-setting skills.
- ☐ d. Engages children and youth in leadership activities.
- ☐ e. Maintains appropriate emotional and physical boundaries between children, youth, and adults.
- ☐ f. Uses appropriate services and resources, including technology, to engage and empower children and youth.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Develops the capacity for self-reflection, communication, empathy, and tolerance of diverse opinions and cultures in children and youth.
- ☐ b. Provides children and youth with opportunities to serve others.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Designs activities to support leadership opportunities.
- ☐ b. Facilitates strategic planning that involves children and youth.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy regarding engaging and empowering children and youth.
- ☐ b. Analyzes organizational culture and implements changes that demonstrate the value and need for child and youth leadership, voice, engagement, and empowerment.



Content Area VII:

Program Planning and Development

Early childhood and youth development professionals actively participate in program planning, delivery, and evaluation of early childhood and youth development programs. Program development, implementation, and management are essential elements to reach program outcomes.

1. Planning and Evaluating the Program

Level 1

- ☐ a. Follows program's mission and policies.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Supports and implements the program's mission and policies.
- ☐ b. Promotes program planning and evaluation using appropriate services and resources, including technology.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Participates in strategic planning and goal setting for program improvement.
- ☐ b. Incorporates cultural diversity into the daily program.
- ☐ c. Implements strategies to promote the value of the program in the community.
- ☐ d. Aligns practices with program policies and procedures.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Develops and monitors program policies and procedures that integrate laws, regulations, and professional standards.
- ☐ b. Manages program resources effectively.
- ☐ c. Identifies and interprets program evaluation methods.
- ☐ d. Promotes collaborations to support the program.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting program planning and evaluation.

2. Managing Personnel

Level 1

- ☐ a. Follows program personnel policies and procedures.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Implements principles of teamwork in interactions with others.
- ☐ b. Promotes personnel management practices using appropriate services and resources, including technology.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Demonstrates the ability to strengthen the program's team.
- ☐ b. Develops personnel policies and procedures that integrate professional standards with laws and regulations.



Level 4

- ☐ a. Recruits and manages staff and volunteers.
- ☐ b. Establishes an organizational culture where staff and volunteers feel valued, competent, and safe.
- ☐ c. Adheres to employment laws and regulations.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting personnel management.

3. Managing Finances

Level 1

- ☐ a. Follows program financial policies and procedures, including standards and regulations.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Promotes financial management practices using appropriate services and resources, including technology.
- ☐ b. Operates within the budget.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Develops and adheres to a budget.
- ☐ b. Develops a fiscal business plan that reflects the program's mission, philosophy, and financial position.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Analyzes, maintains, and evaluates the budget.
- ☐ b. Communicates the program's budget and financial status.
- ☐ c. Adheres to financial laws and regulations.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting financial management.



Content Area VIII:

Professional Development and Leadership

Early childhood and youth development professionals demonstrate their commitment to children, youth, families, and communities through actions and behaviors that demonstrate a high level of ethical conduct. Professionals increase their knowledge and skills in the content areas through ongoing training and education.

1. Displaying Professionalism in Practice

Level 1

- ☐ a. Models a positive attitude when working with children and youth.
- ☐ b. Acts ethically, maintaining confidentiality and impartiality, based on a professional code of ethics.
- ☐ c. Improves teaching and learning through professional work habits.
- ☐ d. Demonstrates the ability to work effectively with others.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Balances demands of personal and professional commitments.
- ☐ b. Demonstrates commitment to a professional code of ethics and other professional guidelines.
- ☐ c. Promotes professionalism using appropriate skills, services, and resources, including technology.
- ☐ d. Interacts with others in a professional manner.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Demonstrates positive relationships and supportive interactions when caring for children and youth.
- ☐ b. Promotes professionalism and ethical responsibilities by following a professional code of ethics.
- ☐ c. Describes relationship between theory and practice.
- ☐ d. Demonstrates oral, written, and technological skills appropriate to one's professional role.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Responds to challenges as opportunities for professional growth.
- ☐ b. Articulates personal philosophy of education, based on knowledge of child and youth development, best practices, and a code of ethics.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting professionalism and a professional code of ethics.
- ☐ b. Applies oral, written, and technological communication skills to one's specialized professional role.

2. Developing as a Professional

Level 1

- ☐ a. Indicates awareness of professional standards.
- ☐ b. Follows a professional development plan.
- ☐ c. Seeks knowledge through interactions with other professionals.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Builds personal and professional competence by using appropriate skills, services, and resources, including technology.



- ☐ b. Develops and implements a professional development plan.
- ☐ c. Participates in activities, projects, and events within the field.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Develops a personal philosophy of education.
- ☐ b. Practices ongoing self-reflection, self-assessment, and problem-solving strategies to promote professional growth.
- ☐ c. Engages in continuous, collaborative professional development for the benefit of self and others.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Creates professional development opportunities for others.
- ☐ b. Evaluates and selects resources for ongoing professional development.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting ongoing professional growth.

3. Displaying Leadership and Promoting Advocacy

Level 1

- ☐ a. Responds to the individual needs of children, youth, and families.
- ☐ b. Identifies characteristics of leadership.
- ☐ c. Recognizes the need to be a voice for children, youth, and families.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Displays leadership traits and identifies strategies for advocacy.
- ☐ b. Promotes leadership and advocacy using appropriate skills, services, and resources, including technology.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Participates in leadership and advocacy opportunities within the profession.
- ☐ b. Encourages and empowers others to engage in advocacy and leadership.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Serves in leadership roles within the profession.
- ☐ b. Advocates for best practices in child and youth development.
- ☐ c. Advocates for programs and policies that impact the overall quality of services for children, youth, and families.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting leadership and advocacy.
- ☐ b. Creates opportunities for others to serve in leadership and advocacy roles.

4. Displaying Cultural Awareness and Respect

Level 1

- ☐ a. Develops awareness of own cultural beliefs and practices.
- ☐ b. Seeks new knowledge regarding diversity in cultural beliefs and practices.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Values cultural differences in children, youth, and families.
- ☐ b. Promotes cultural awareness and respect using appropriate skills, services, and resources, including technology.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Increases own understanding of different cultural groups, including one's own cultural identities, beliefs, practices, and biases.
- ☐ b. Establishes an inviting and nurturing educational environment that respects and values each child and youth.
- ☐ c. Communicates the cultural and environmental effects on learning, behavior, and development.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Challenges biases and stereotypes.
- ☐ b. Supports the cultural identity, beliefs, and practices of each child and youth.
- ☐ c. Incorporates global perspectives while avoiding stereotypes.
- ☐ d. Connects teaching and learning approaches to the experiences and cultures of others.
- ☐ e. Creates a trusting environment by employing multicultural strategies and teaching tolerance.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Evaluates, applies, and articulates current theory, resources, research, and policy promoting cultural competence and responsiveness.
- ☐ b. Analyzes organizational culture and implements changes that foster more equitable and culturally relevant and responsive practices.

CORE COMPETENCIES Content Areas and Sub-Content Areas	CDA/YDC Content Areas and Functional Areas
<p>Content Area V: Health and Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting Risk Management Practices Protecting Children and Youth Promoting Physical Health Promoting Healthy Eating <p>Content Area II: Learning Environment and Curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a Developmentally Appropriate Learning Environment and Curriculum 	<p>1. Safe, Healthy Learning Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe Healthy Learning Environment (CDA only) Out-of School Environments (YDC only)
<p>Content Area II: Learning Environment and Curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting Physical Development Promoting Language and Communication Development Promoting Creative Development Promoting Cognitive Development 	<p>2. Physical and Intellectual Competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical Cognitive Communication Creative
<p>Content Area II: Learning Environment and Curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting Social and Emotional Development <p>Content Area V: Health and Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting Mental Health <p>Content Area VI: Interactions with Children and Youth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing Individual Guidance Enhancing Group Experiences Engaging and Empowering Children and Youth 	<p>3. Social and Emotional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self Social Guidance
<p>Content Area IV: Families and Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicating with Families Building Relationships with Families Building Partnerships within Communities 	<p>4. Relationships with Families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families
<p>Content Area VII: Program Planning and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Evaluating the Program Managing Personnel Managing Finances 	<p>5. Program Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program Management
<p>Content Area VIII: Professional Development and Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displaying Professionalism in Practice Developing as a Professional Displaying Leadership and Promoting Advocacy Displaying Cultural Awareness and Respect 	<p>6. Professionalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professionalism
<p>Content Area III: Observation and Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observation and Assessing Children and Youth 	<p>7. Observing and Recording Behavior (CDA) and Supporting the Development of Values, Social Competence, and Positive Identity through Observations (YDC)</p>
<p>Content Area I: Child and Youth Growth and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting Growth and Development 	<p>8. Growth and Development</p>

For additional information on state or national crosswalks visit the Child Care Aware® of Kansas website (www.ks.childcareaware.org) or the OPEN Initiative website (www.OPENInitiative.org).

Definitions

Content Area I:

Inclusive philosophy: A general belief in the full acceptance of all children and youth that leads to a sense of belonging within the early childhood and youth setting.

Multiple intelligences: Refers to different types of human intelligence as defined by Howard Gardner. The different independent types of human intelligence include verbal, quantitative, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligence.

Content Area II:

Sensory integration: The brain's ability to take in information, process it, and use it to regulate one's self.

Perceptual motor development: The growth of muscular coordination as it influences one's ability to receive, interpret, and respond successfully to sensory information.

Content Area III:

Informal assessments: A method of measuring performance through observation or other informal techniques like work sampling, checklists, running records, and performance and portfolio assessments. Often during informal assessment children and youth are not aware that their development or progress is being measured.

Formal assessments: A method of measuring performance based on standardized measures that are administered with specific protocol.

Referrals: Making a recommendation or actual linkage of a child, youth, and family with other professionals, for the purpose of more in-depth assessment and planning.

Content Area IV:

Community norms: Beliefs shared by a community about accepted behavior that serve as a foundation for how opinions are formed.

Strengths-based: Rather than focus on "what's wrong," a strengths-based approach identifies the positive resources and abilities that children, youth, and families have.

Content Area V: None

Content Area VI:

Differentiated instructional and guidance procedures: The process of teaching and guiding children and youth of differing abilities by using varied instructional and guidance methods.

Content Area VII: None

Content Area VIII:

Code of ethics: A set of general principles adopted by a profession that outlines the shared beliefs and values of the profession.

Philosophy of education: A written statement that describes one's personal approach to guiding and educating children and youth.

Self-reflection: The process of self-observation that involves the examination of one's own thoughts, feelings, actions, motives, and character.

Self-assessment: To intentionally reflect about one's self and professional practice in order to improve and make informed career decisions.

Cultural identities: The identity of an individual based on one's belonging to a specific group or culture.

Global perspectives: A viewpoint that develops through multicultural experiences and leads to an understanding and respect for worldwide interconnectedness.

Multicultural strategies: Strategies that relate to an interest in many cultures within a society, in addition to the mainstream culture.

Tolerance: A willingness to listen and learn from others even when it doesn't align with one's current belief system.



Child Care Aware® of Kansas Toll Free: 877-678-2548 or 785-823-3343 • www.ks.childcareaware.org

OPEN Initiative Toll Free: 877-782-0185 or 573-884-3373 • www.OPENInitiative.org

Missouri AfterSchool Network (MASN) Toll Free: 888-210-2469 or 573-884-2462 • www.moasn.org

Kansas Enrichment Network 785-864-9665 • www.kansasenrichment.net